

## THE SYMBOLIC VOYAGE OF ANCIENT WATERCRAFTS TO THE NEW WORLD

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### *Abstract*

One of the most fundamental characteristics of the beliefs of the ancient world is that their attribution meaning to objects and adorning them with *numinous* power. For ancient people who settled on the water coastline like rivers, streams, seas and oceans, the sacredness of water and the numinous power it gained is undeniable. Believing that the first existence in the creation of the universe began with primordial waters, these societies transferred this sanctity they created in water to the watercrafts they traveled on. Ancient societies attributed ideological, religious, and symbolic meanings to these vehicles. The most effective of these meanings is their use as symbolic vehicles on the way to another world, new beginnings, and the real life after death, representing the transition from chaos to order. Ancient societies, who regarded the world they lived in only as a passage to reach the post-mortal reality, ascribed symbolic meanings to water vehicles and made them special in their spiritual journey to reach this eternal life. This study aims to examine the symbolic journeys of watercraft used in ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean societies to the New World in the context of Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Anatolian cultures in the light of archaeological data.

**Keywords:** Watercraft, Symbolic Voyage, Ancient Mesopotamia, Ancient Egypt, Ancient Anatolia.

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## ANTİK ÇAĞ'DA SU TAŞITLARININ YENİ YAŞAMA SEMBOLİK YOLCULUĞU

### Öz

Antik dünya inançlarının en temel özelliklerinden biri, nesnelere anlam yüklemeleri ve onları tanrısal bir güçle süslemeleridir. Nehirler, dereler, denizler ve okyanuslar gibi su kıyılarına yerleşen kadim insanlar için suyun kutsallığı ve kazandığı sayısal güç yadsınamaz. Evrenin yaratılışındaki ilk varoluşun ilksel sularla başladığına inanan bu toplumlar, suda yarattıkları bu kutsallığı seyahat ettikleri su araçlarına da aktarmışlardır. Kadim toplumlar bu araçlara ideolojik, dini ve sembolik anlamlar yüklemişlerdir. Bu anlamlardan en etkilisi, başka bir dünyaya, yeni başlangıçlara ve ölümden sonraki gerçek hayata giden yolda, kaostan düzene geçişi temsil eden sembolik araçlar olarak kullanılmalarıdır. Yaşadıkları dünyayı sadece ölüm sonrası gerçekliğe ulaşmak için bir geçit olarak gören kadim toplumlar, bu sonsuz yaşama ulaşmak için çıktıkları ruhani yolculukta su araçlarına sembolik anlamlar yüklemiş ve onları özel kılmışlardır. Bu çalışma, Antik Yakın Doğu ve Akdeniz toplumlarında kullanılan su taşıtlarının Yeni Dünya'ya sembolik yolculuklarını arkeolojik veriler ışığında Mısır, Mezopotamya ve Anadolu kültürleri bağlamında incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelime:** Su Taşıtları, Sembolik Yolculuk, Antik Mezopotamya, Antik Mısır, Antik Anadolu.

### INTRODUCTION

In ancient times, people living on the banks of rivers or lakes used logs, wide-mouthed cubes or inflated sheep and goat skins as the first examples of water transportation. After a while, due to the limitation of such vehicles in transportation and the desire to sail the seas, the need to improve these vehicles arose and more comprehensive vehicles began to be produced (Albayrak et al, 2019, p. 19). Serving many different cultures for many different purposes rowboats, boats, and ships have been among the most special vehicles from past to present. The purpose of using water vehicles has gone beyond the transportation and these vehicles have served many different purposes according to the socio-cultural structure of societies.

Throughout the existence of mankind, watercraft have been among the most complex artifacts invented by civilizations. At the most basic linguistic and functional level, "ship" means "transportation". As Rich points out, ships are metaphors and metaphors are ships. The word metaphor literally means "to carry across" in Greek (meta, on + pherein, to carry), which is exactly what ships and boats do (Rich, 2013, p. 63). On the whole, watercraft move people, objects and ideas from one place to another. Metaphorically, ships are the preferred means of sailing to new worlds and other lands. Throughout the centuries, watercraft have been attributed mystical meanings as they travel through the unknown compared to other vehicles. In this sense even today, every time a sailor steps aboard a ship with the inherited presence of an idea from the ancient world, he experiences a literal rite of passage.

Water vehicles are one of the last remnants of one of the most striking mindsets of the ancient tradition established on base the belief that ascribed animate meaning and sanctification to inanimate objects. Completely removing the use of objects from their functionality, the numinous power<sup>2</sup> attributed to objects made them the main protagonists of rituals. This idea of antiquity was mostly observed in water vehicles. In today's world, there is a clear distinction between the inanimate and the animate, and inanimate objects reflect whatever they are in a material sense. In the ancient world, where many objects took on symbolic meaning, even ships and the wood used to build them were associated with the divine.

It is seen that the water vehicles were ideologically, religiously and symbolically attributed meanings such as transition to the new life and salvation from chaos in antiquity (Rich, 2013, p. 1). According to the many ancient civilizations, the afterlife was a new beginning and it accurately meant the transition to absolute reality and eternal life. Although death is defined as the cessation of biological functions that keep the organism alive and at the end of life in reality, even in some today's societies the world we live in seems only a preparation for the afterlife and the real absolute life ironically begins after death. The dogma of new life in another world has formed the basic doctrine of many faiths. To overcome the fear of death, which includes fears of the unknown, uncertainty, loneliness and suffering in the underworld, it has become an option to envision death as a sublime reunion rather than annihilation. According to Sigmund Freud's "Psychodynamic Approach," as part of social psychology, associating historical events with spirituality and religious phenomena are behaviors that deny death and desire a new life.

## **1. EGYPT: THE BOAT OF RA**

Since the Nile River was the main source of life in ancient Egyptian societies, the importance of rafts, boats and other watercraft were very special in the region. The beginning of the evolution of boatbuilding in Egypt dates back to the first people who appeared on the banks of the Nile River and built rafts of reeds to cross the river or to fish on it (Rich, 2013, p. 65). Periodically, as this civilization developed, as the needs increased, as the desire to explore new lands increased, and as these vehicles began to acquire symbolic meaning in a divine context, the construction of highly sophisticated watercraft from simple vehicles draws attention.

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<sup>2</sup> For detailed information and definition, see Otto 2014: 48.

Due to the natural environment of ancient Egypt, the importance and necessity for boats in this society emerged very early. It is not surprising that this vehicle appears in all categories of artistic and craft production, as boat models, painted or engraved images on a wide variety of materials such as ceramics, textiles, architecture and rock carvings, and as actual boats buried in tombs. The Egyptian boat appears to have played an important role in political, military and funerary as well as ceremonial activities, and was used as a powerful symbol in artistic production (Vanhulle, 2018, p. 173).

The first symbolic mention of watercraft in ancient Egypt was recorded in the Pyramid Texts on the pyramid of the last Fifth Dynasty pharaoh, Unas: 'He flies like a goose; he lands like a scarab on your empty throne in your boat, O Ra (...) [Unas] flies away from the earth in your boat, O Ra'; so that when you go out of the horizon, he [Unas] holds his staff in his hand as the helmsman of the boat (Mercer, 1952, p. 89).

A common theme shared by many of the boat petroglyphs is a dancer standing in the center of the ship with her arms raised, and the same image is evident on large ceremonial clay vessels. The dancer is interpreted as a performer in a funeral procession following the sun's path over the Nile from east to west to the cemeteries on the west bank. Another element to be considered in this context is the movement of the painted boats from right to left (east to west) across the surface of the pottery, indicating a movement from the land of the living to the land of the dead, since the necropolises are almost always located on the west bank of the Nile, in the direction of the setting sun (Rich, 2013, p. 65). In addition to these, other vessels without any figures have been recovered as burial objects from graves buried in a westward direction.

The east signified not only the Nile, but most importantly the rising sun, the true symbol of resurrection, renewal and rebirth. Every day the deified sun was witnessed traveling in its golden boat across the sky from east to west, passing through the Duat (underworld) before rising again at night on the eastern horizon. Pharaoh would follow the sun on this daily journey after his death. In this particular case, the boats were buried in a position of anticipation, facing the time when the sun would rise again and life would continue in its next cycle (Rich, 2013, p. 699).

One of the descriptions in a religious context is that the ships were used as funerary transport to carry the royal mummy from the east bank of the Nile to the west bank for burial, depicted as "sun barges" to carry the deceased in the sky with Ra. Another is its characterization as a means of transportation to the afterlife from the religious centers of Buto, Heliopolis and Sais in Lower Egypt. Another meaning associated with the boats is that they were used for the

coronation rituals of the king and the four sons of Horus, each having control over a cardinal direction. Others prefer that the buried boats act as a symbol of the deceased's awareness of divine or hidden secrets, enabling him or her to qualify to join the gods (Rich, 2013, p. 71). As can be seen, the most prominent symbolic meaning of boats in Ancient Egypt is their metaphorical use as a new beginning in the other world.

Several burials of royal ships from the Old Kingdom period, and data from funerary iconography, lead to the conclusion that the ships of that period were the "Night Barges of the Sun". This is clear from two ritual texts that describe how these ships moved not on earth but in the celestial realm: "You sail south with the 'Night Barge of the Sun' and row north with the 'Day Barge of the Sun'" and "Your right eye is the Night Barge of the Sun and your left eye is the Day Barge of the Sun" (Altenmüller, 2002, pp. 279-280). The first text indicates that the pharaoh had a ship to navigate the sky not only during the day but also at night, meaning two different ships for two different journeys at two different times (day or night). The second text also indicates that the Night Barge traveled on the west bank of the Nile and the Day Barge traveled on the east bank. (Rich, 2013, p. 72). In addition, the absence of any reference to water for the symbolic boats in the Pyramid Texts suggests that the boat's journey took place in the sky, and stars were depicted in the burial chamber, the ante-chamber and the corridor (Verner, 2002, p. 334). As Vianello points out, the Egyptians preferred the use of boats as the most suitable means of transportation for a pharaoh and therefore adapted to their own needs the widespread belief that overemphasized the role of the ship as the only means of transportation capable of such a journey (2006, p. 29).

As mentioned above, one of the main religious images of the Egyptians was the continuous journey of Ra, the Sun god, across the sky in his two boats, day and night<sup>3</sup>. The constant movement of the sun's boats signified the continuous functioning of Maat<sup>4</sup> which was the fundamental moral foundation of the entire universe, including the celestial realm was the image of a blessed afterlife included joining Ra in his boat (Assmann, 2006, pp. 193-194). Those who traveled with Ra were assured of rebirth as the Sun emerged from the sky goddess

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<sup>3</sup> The Sun God Ra is one of the oldest and most important deities in Egypt. The creation of the universe began when Ra appeared on the horizon in the form of the sun, and human life was associated with his daily journey across the sky. In ancient Egyptian belief, Ra was thought to travel through the sky in two boats: the ATET or MATET boat, which he used to travel from sunrise to noon, and the SEKTET boat, which he used to travel from noon to sunset (Budge, 2018, p. 101).

<sup>4</sup> It is a complex concept used by the Egyptians to express order and balance in the universe. Where there was *maat*, which was represented by the feather, there was righteousness, justice and correct behavior. One of the most important duties of the king was to ensure the protection of *Maat* (Mieroop, 2019, p. 350).

Nut every morning in his boat (Hornung, 1984, p. 37). As a result, images of boats abound in funerary art, especially in the vignettes accompanying the underworld books in many royal tombs of the Egyptian New Kingdom, show the many stages of the Sun's nocturnal journey. Furthermore, the discovery of petroglyphs, probably from the late Predynastic period, showing boats traveling upside down suggests possible links to the concept of metaphysical boats traveling in an inverted, nocturnal world even in this remote period (Vinson, 2013, p. 6).

It is understood from archaeological data and written texts that the source of the symbolic meaning of boats in Ancient Egypt is related to the sun god Ra. The fact that Ra's daily route is from east to west every sunrise and that the tombs are oriented towards the west reveals the symbolic relationship of the west with the underworld. The fact that the dead made their journey to the absolute reality, which was a new beginning, i.e., after death, with Ra's boat is proof that boats in the belief of Ancient Egypt, were a tool used in the spiritual journey to open up to newness. In Ancient Mesopotamian society, as in Ancient Egypt, the symbolic journey of watercraft exhibits different images related to the afterlife.

## **2. MESOPOTAMIA: MOON GOD, FLOOD AND GILGAMESH**

In Ancient Mesopotamia, geographically dominated by the Euphrates and Tigris rivers and canals, the use of boats occupied a wide area in the religious, economic, cultural and social life of the society. In ancient Mesopotamian art and written sources, the journeys of the gods in boats were depicted as one of the primary rituals practiced in the region, and the image of boats was among the most frequently used themes. Depictions of god figures standing in a boat are known to date back to the Early Dynastic and Akkadian Periods (Black & Green, 2017, p. 293).

The most basic material that the Mesopotamian geography provided for the people of the region was clay, and this clay was used in many products in daily life, as well as in the construction of models of the watercraft required for river transportation (Albayrak et al, 2019, p. 21). There were many different models of watercraft in Mesopotamia<sup>5</sup>. These vehicles were used for many different purposes in the region, including commercial, administrative and religious. We find evidence of this in various written documents. One of

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<sup>5</sup> For detailed information, see Albayrak, İ. & Esmâ Ö. & Hakan E. 2019.

these is the text entitled as "The Curse of Akkad", includes the description of Akkadian ships<sup>6</sup>.

The main reason why watercraft were considered sacred in ancient Mesopotamia was that the means of transportation of the Moon God NANNA/Sin was a boat. According to Jacobsen, the reason why the moon god is described as the boat of the heavens and the idea that he traveled with this vehicle stemmed from the crescent shape of the moon (Thornkild, 2017, p. 167). According to written texts and iconography, the Moon god was believed to travel in a boat across the sky at midnight, and all the planets and stars in the sky were depicted as cows under the Moon god's care (Kramer, 2001, p. 13).

Humanity has seen the Moon as a living organism just like itself. Its rising reflects life and its setting reflects death (Eliade, 2005, p. 187). The Roman writer Cicero described the Moon's relationship with immortality as follows: "Above the moon everything is eternal, below it there is nothing but the mortality of souls condemned to decay, given to men by the grace of the gods" (Cicero, VI. XVIII.). In ancient Mesopotamia, there were many literary texts and iconography linking the Moon to death, rebirth and new beginnings. The Moon's ever-changing state, its power to influence the waters and its disappearance gave this deity a special meaning in this culture.

In Mesopotamian society, depending on the phases of the moon, some rituals called "essesu" were practiced on the first, seventh and fifteenth days of the month. This was a period that corresponds to the days when the moon disappears. On the day the moon became invisible, it was believed that the moon god descended to the underworld with two other gods, and special offering rituals were practiced for this occasion<sup>7</sup>. The disappearance of the moon represented the death of the moon and the new cycle of life, which was to be prevented and evil was to be eradicated (Demirci, 2013, p. 78). *Essesu* rituals had exactly for this purpose and the word *essesu* literally means new, renewal and rebirth. This word is more common in eschatological myths and forms the basis of the phenomenon of avoiding disasters and benefiting from good

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<sup>6</sup> The ships at the docks of the Akkadian country were mentioned as follows: "There was excitement in the harbor where the ships were anchored. All foreign lands rejoiced.....Ships brought the Sumerian gods upstream (to Agade).....It was as if a giant ship had come to destroy Ekur, to break up his (Ekur's) land like mountains from which important minerals were mined.....Wide ships anchored in the temple, wide ships anchored in the temple of Enlil..... The ships shook....." (Albayrak et al, 2019, p. 23)

<sup>7</sup>When the days in a month are calculated and you reach this day, when a ritual is over and you declare to the people that the day of "coming down" has come, your majestic judgments, O lord, you are a magnificent decision-maker in legal cases in the land of the dead. ENKI and NINKI, the supreme lords, the supreme princes, await the issues to come out of your mouth as they make their administrative decisions (Jacobsen, 2007, p. 165).

fortune. In other words, every birth is both a chance and a risk. As Demirci points out, *Essesu* rituals aimed to prevent potential calamities during the three phases of the moon that society considered inauspicious or taboo (2013, p. 59).

Evidence of the moon god NANNA/Sin's connection to childbirth and boats can be seen in a Middle Assyrian seal found in Samsat, which depicts the moon god in a boat, holding a crescent banner and an omega symbol. As this seal suggests, the omega sign was also associated with the moon. Therefore, "moon" is associated with pregnancy and birth (Ziffer, 2019, p. 18). In this sense, the boat's connection with birth as well as death in the journey of transition to a new world draws attention. In a birth ritual from the Old Babylonian Period, the birth process is likened to a journey made by boat<sup>8</sup>. In the "steering the boat" ritual, the woman giving birth was identified with the captain of a boat (Hammons, 2008, p. 140).

Another striking examples pointing to the symbolic journey of water vehicles to the new world was the boat mentioned in the Gilgamesh epic. It is seen that boats and ships were used in the journey to the afterlife and to create a new beginning by surviving a flood in which everything was destroyed. 'Flood Story'<sup>9</sup> also has a very valuable place for the Abrahamic religions. As Eliade points out, all of the flood beliefs involve the idea that the world and all of humanity are inundated by a catastrophic flood and a new era begins. In this cycle, one era ends with a natural disaster sent by the Creator and a new era ruled and founded by new people begins. (2014, p. 215).

The last three tablets of the epic are about Gilgamesh's journey to find ZI-U-SUDRA (Udnapištim) who is the only hero to survive the Flood, in order to find the secret of immortality. Gilgamesh crosses the Mashhu Mountain, which only the sun god Šamaš can cross. He then crosses the 'Sea of Death' in a boat with the boatman Uršanabi and finally reaches Udnapištim to learn his story (Jackson, 2008, p. 67). In the episode in which Siduri

<sup>8</sup> "The woman about to give birth controls the rudder of the boat on the water... starting from the horizon, the woman about to give birth controls the rudder of the boat on the water. She has loaded perfume to carry into the boat. She has loaded the boat with cedar for transportation. She has loaded the boat with cedar scent to carry it inside. He has loaded agate and lapis lazuli to carry in the boat, but he does not know if it is agate; he does not know if it is lapis lazuli. The boat spends time at the dock, it leaves the dock. The boat stops at the dock of death; the boat 'Magurru' is kept at the dock of distress. It can be freed from the dock of death at the command of Sin, the ruler of words; the magurru boat can be freed from the dock of tribulation at the command of Sin, the ruler of words." (Scurlock, 1991, pp. 146-147).

<sup>9</sup> The LORD then said to Noah, "Go into the ark, you and your whole family, because I have found you righteous in this generation. Take with you seven pairs of every kind of clean animal, a male and its mate, and one pair of every kind of unclean animal, a male and its mate, and also seven pairs of every kind of bird, male and female, to keep their various kinds alive throughout the earth. Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made." And Noah did all that the LORD commanded him. Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came on the earth. And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. Genesis: 7: 1-7.



tells Gilgamesh about the boatman Uršanabi's journey, the following sentences appear: "He carves the serpent bow of the boat, look at it carefully. Perhaps you can cross the sea of death with him" (Kılıç & Eser, 2017, p. 144). Gilgamesh's crossing the mountain and crossing the sea of death was in fact the passage of his soul to the other world and the experience of death. According to Hooke, all these stages were practiced in rites of passage, and the fact that Assyrian and Babylonian funeral rituals include elements such as boats, boatmen, underground waters, the judgment and determination of fate, and the struggle against evil forces confirms this phenomenon (Hooke, 1939, p. 144).

### **3. ANATOLIA: QUEEN OF KANIŠ**

As in every settlement region, great civilizations in Anatolia were also established on the banks of rivers and lakes. Tigris, Euphrates and Kızılırmak rivers were among the important water sources for the establishment of great civilizations in Anatolia. The Hittites were the first civilization to settle around the Kızılırmak. The Hittites adopted water resources as sacred due to their beliefs and believed that water was an intermediary between the underworld and the earth (Turgut, 2015, p. 339). The fact that rivers and streams, which were considered sacred and deified by the Hittites, were in close relations with the underworld as in direct proportion to the beliefs in Mesopotamian and Egyptian societies. Some gods descended to the underworld using water vehicles and at the same time, the goddess of the underworld ascended to the surface in the same way. It was also mentioned in written sources that in various rituals, some events were organized to enable the goddesses to come out of rivers, seas and streams (Coşkun, 2019, p. 316; Baltacıoğlu, 2005, p. 5).

Some striking religious objects from this period have been discovered. Among these cult objects, a rhyton found in one of the Kültepe tombs is unique in terms of the religious use of watercraft. This rhyton is a remarkable drinking vessel in the form of a ram-headed dinghy. On top of a space in the center of the boat is a temple designed in the form of a tower. Inside the open-fronted temple is a statuette of a goddess standing with her arms folded across her chest. Above the temple is an eagle with open wings. A boatman with a pointed cap is standing inside the rowboat, holding the oar out. Behind the boat, another male figurine with a pointed cap embraces the platform from which the temple rises. This artifact reminds the cult trips made by the gods in ancient Mesopotamia in boats. Sumerian texts describe the ritual

trips of the gods in boats on ceremonial days. The statue of the goddess of Kanish in the boat is also thought to depict a ritual journey (Günbattı, 2017, p. 151).

The vessels, found in building levels II and Ib at Karum, are distinctive among the cult objects of Ancient Anatolia compared to other remains and are vivid examples that document the continuation of Sumerian-Akadian-style religious rituals in Anatolia. The drinking vessels are in the form of boats or boats with ram or bull heads and contain human, animal, god and/or goddess figures. Some depict boatmen or boatmen with oars in their hands and pointed headdresses on their heads. The fact that these cult objects were unearthed from a tomb gives the symbolic meaning of traveling underground by boat.

It is possible that these cult excursions took place on the Kızılırmak and/or Zamantı rivers in the immediate vicinity of Kaniš: "The queen of Kaniš gave birth to thirty sons at once. She said: "What kind of (creatures) have I given birth to! She plastered the boats with pitch and put the children in them and released them into the river (Ekmen, 2015, p. 53). The river took them to the sea in the land of Zalpuwa. The gods took the children from the sea. They raised them..." (Alp, 2005, p. 56).

The vehicle, translated as a boat or basket, is clearly plastered with pitch. Similarly, the story of the Akkadian king Sargon being placed by his mother in a basket plastered with pitch and then thrown into the river (Euphrates) is completely parallel (Günbattı, 1997, pp. 131-132). As it can be understood from this narrative, it is again a water vehicle that helps the children, who are thrown into the river on a boat and raised by the gods, to take the steps of a new beginning. Another piece of data showing that in the second millennium B.C., rivers in Anatolia were used for cultic travel rituals comes from Samsat.

It is supported by the data that Anatolia was under the influence of Mesopotamia in terms of belief and culture, especially during the Hittite period. The objects in the form of boats found in ancient Anatolian tombs and the rituals practiced especially on the Kızılırmak emphasize the religious meaning of watercraft in the region.

## **CONCLUSION**

Water vehicles have been associated with very strong symbolic meanings. They gained the most special sanctity of the numinous power by transitioning society from chaos to order. First of all, due to the sacred meanings of rivers, waters and primordial waters, which were

considered to be the beginning of everything in the belief phenomenon of Antiquity, water vehicles assumed the title of sacredness in the transition to a new life.

For the ancient civilizations founded on the water's coast, these vehicles were invested with sacred and symbolic meanings as a means of reaching other lands, the discovery of new worlds and passage to the underworld. Ancient Egyptian, Mesopotamian and Anatolian civilizations attributed ideological, religious and symbolic meanings to watercraft, such as passage to the other world and salvation from chaos.

The source of the meanings attributed to water vehicles in ancient Egypt is the Sun god Ra. According to archaeological data and written sources, Ra used to complete his daily route with two boats every day. The reason why the tombs and burials were oriented towards the west was that Ra descended to the underworld of Duat every day from this direction. The fact that the dead made their journey to eternal life with Ra's boat, which meant a new beginning for this society, is a proof that boats were a tool used in ancient Egyptian beliefs to open up to newness in the spiritual journey.

In Ancient Mesopotamian society, as in Ancient Egypt, the symbolic journey of watercraft exhibits different images related to the afterlife. The symbolism in this civilization is mostly based on the moon god NANNA/Suen. The moon god made his journey by boat, and the changing states of the moon, sometimes disappearing and affecting the waters, reflect the relationship of this god and his boat with death, new beginnings and birth. In addition, the episode of Gilgamesh traveling by boat while descending to the underworld in his quest for immortality is in fact another proof of the use of water transportation in Ancient Mesopotamia in the transition to the new world. In addition, the symbolic meaning of the watercraft mentioned in the flood mythos to create a new life draws attention. The boats in Hittites were used in rituals performed in rivers and streams, and the objects with boat motifs found in the tomb support their symbolic use as a means of passage to the underworld.

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